

# Turn-over-an-old-leaf-Compost!

Tried-and-true recipe for decomposed organic matter

**Ingredient—Use equal part of:**

**Brown yard waste:** dry leaves, small twigs, dry flower stalks, straw

**Green yard waste:** grass clippings, fresh leaves, flowers, houseplants

1. Place your compost bin in a partially shaded area.
2. Layer brown yard waste on the bottom
3. Add green yard waste
4. Sprinkle with water to moisten. Toss to mix.
5. Continue adding layers of green and brown yard waste as it accumulates, sprinkle with water to keep mix moist. Turn pile each time you add ingredients.
6. Let mixture sit for 3-6 months, checking occasionally.

**Amount:** Makes one bin full.

**Serving suggestions:** Mix into garden before planting, or sift and use as a top dressing on your lawn. Repeat applications spring and fall.

**CAUTION! Do not add:** Food scraps (put in worm bin), pet waste, diseased plants, thorny plants, evergreen or waxy leaves, woody branches larger than 1/2 inch, invasive or noxious weeds.

Visit our web site at [www.metrokc.gov/soils](http://www.metrokc.gov/soils) or call King County Solid Waste Division at: (206) 296-4466; 1-800-325-6165, ext. 4466; 1-800-833-6388 (TTY relay).

Compost improves the soil and helps grow healthy plants. It is moist and has a rich dark color and an earthy aroma.

Post this recipe next to your bin for easy reference.



Information presented here is available in alternate formats upon request.

symptom	problem	solution
Compost smells stinky.	Mixture is too wet; has too much grass or high concentration of green materials.	Turn the pile to aerate and add brown materials like leaves or straw.
Compost is too dry—not moist like a wrung-out sponge.	Too many brown materials or not enough water	Add water and turn the pile, add green materials to activate organisms.
Compost is too wet.	Compost is wetter than a wrung-out sponge.	Add dry materials and toss materials together to aerate.
Nothing seems to be happening!?	Check: Is it moist? Airy? Has it <i>cooked</i> long enough? Maybe your compost is doing great and you can't see it.	<b>COMPOST HAPPENS!</b> Be patient. With enough time and the right ingredients, this is a foolproof recipe.



KING COUNTY

Why be just a gardener when you can...

# Be a Yardener!

Take five steps to be a Yardener:

- 1 Compost your yardwaste in a Backyard Compost Bin.** Compost your kitchen waste (vegetable and fruit) in a Worm Bin.

When you mix compost into your garden soil you:

- Create healthy soil and suppress weeds,
- Improve the availability of soil nutrients in your garden,
- Improve the soil's ability to hold water, and
- Naturally fertilize and control pests without using chemicals.

For more information about composting and worm bins, visit our Web site at <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/swd/>

- 2 Make your garden bugs your buddies.** Insecticides kill the good bugs and the bad bugs. For a copy of "Grow Smart, Grow Safe" call (206)296-4692 or visit <http://www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste/house/pests.html> to learn more about pesticide free gardening.

- 3 Rid yourself of garden chemicals.** Visit the Hazardous Wastemobile. For a schedule, call (206) 296-4692 or visit the Web site at <http://www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste/wastemobile/index.htm>

- 4 From garbage to garden art!** Explore the variety of recycled products available for use in your garden. For information, visit <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/market/>

- 5 Avoid Noxious Weeds!** Watch out for those exotic plants that are tough to control and take over your garden. Visit our Web site to find out more: <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/LANDS/weedid.htm>

For more information on all of these topics call the King County Solid Waste Division at **(206)296-4466**.



Printed with soy-based ink on weather-resistant recyclable plastic card stock for posting in your gardening area.